

# The Tables Turned.

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## A LETTER

TO THE

CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK,

REVIEWING

THE REPORT OF THEIR COMMITTEE

ON

"The relation of the American Tract Society

TO THE

SUBJECT OF SLAVERY."

BY A CONGREGATIONALIST DIRECTOR.

BOSTON:

CROCKER & BREWSTER, 47 WASHINGTON-STREET.

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(F.B.)

# A LETTER

TO THE

## CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK.

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DEAR BRETHREN—At your late annual meeting at Spencerport, August 26, 1855, you are represented to have “unanimously adopted” the report of a Committee on the “relation of the leading benevolent societies to the subject of slavery.” “The document was received by the association with a deep and painful solemnity; evincing the grief of good men at the course of the Tract Society.” “It was voted that it should be published with the minutes, and in the newspapers, and that the delegates of the association to corresponding bodies be requested to acquaint those bodies with its general purport.” Thus the ecclesiastical organizations of the several New England states, and of Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Canada, and the general assembly of the (N. S.) Presbyterian church, with which your association hold correspondence, are to enjoy the light shed on a great question by the investigations of your Committee.

The extraordinary importance given to this document will warrant a somewhat detailed examination of its statements and reasonings. There is the more occasion for inquiry as to the *facts* in the case, inasmuch as some of the Congregational journals have been unceasing in their reiteration of the charges of wrong-doing on the part of the American Tract Society. For the first time, these injurious allegations have received a responsible endorsement by the unanimous sanction of a grave ecclesiastical body. The officers of the Society have been occupied with other and better work than newspaper controversy; and the friends of the Society, while grieved with the spirit in which the discussion has been conducted, seem, by common consent, to have maintained a discreet silence. In the humble judgment of a member of your own honored communion, the

time has come to examine the complaints against a peaceful Christian institution, and to disabuse the public mind of those suspicions with which it has been needlessly filled. As unconscious, and it may be hoped unwilling, though responsible, parties to what appears to me to be vital wrong towards an unoffending Society, you are appealed to for the exercise of candor and magnanimity in reviewing a document to which you have lent the influence of your unanimous approval.

I wish to be understood distinctly on one point, at the outset. The right of individual members of benevolent societies, or of Christian pastors, or associations of ministers, to investigate the affairs of religious charitable institutions—nay, the duty of investigating them, so as to have a secure basis for Christian confidence and coöperation, is undeniable. No responsible Society but courts and welcomes such inquiry. But it must be deliberate *investigation*, not inconsiderate reprobation; candid *inquiry*, not fixed pre-judgment, or it is an abuse and a wrong. You intended no such wrong. You proceeded with prudence and caution. A year ago, at your session at Madrid, you passed the following resolution :

*Resolved*—That Rev. RAY PALMER, D. D., Rev. J. P. THOMPSON, and Rev. S. W. STREETER be constituted a Committee to investigate, and to report at the next meeting of this body, in regard to the course pursued by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Missionary Society, the American Tract Society, the American Missionary Association, and the American Sunday-school Union, on the subject of slavery.” See minutes, page 11.

You expected and had a right to expect your Committee to “*investigate*” a matter of grave concern, and bring before you the results of that investigation. You could not but have supposed that, in a matter involving the character of “the leading benevolent Societies,” and their Committees and officers on a vital question—a matter of such moment as to warrant an appeal from your association to all the sister churches in the land with which you hold correspondence, perhaps implicating the character of our entire communion, and involving revolutionary action—the members of your Committee would confer, frequently and prayerfully, about their report. It must have been the conviction that you had thus attained the impartial truth, from impartial and pains-taking men, which induced “a deep feeling of sorrow and of shame, that the cause of Christ was reproached, the Christianity of the North misrepresented, and the Christianity of

the South enfeebled by a policy which eliminates from the gospel, as published by the Tract Society, the heavenly spirit of *equal love to all.*"

The facts are these: the chairman of your Committee, whose name alone would entitle it to general credit—*never saw the Report, till weeks after your meeting had been held*, and was absent from the meeting at which it was presented. The report of your meeting leaves the impression that Dr. Palmer *was* present, and a party to this whole matter, no intimation to the contrary being given, either in newspaper or pamphlet, and his name appearing in capitals as "REGISTER AND TREASURER" in the account of your "organization"—see *Independent*, August 30—though it must be presumed that some *verbal* explanation was made to the twenty or thirty members of your body. And the further fact is stated, without fear of contradiction, that the acting chairman of your Committee, whose multiform duties have required him to pass almost daily the door of the Tract house during the year of his appointment, has in no instance, within that period, made an inquiry of any officer or Committee-man connected with the institution on any point embraced in the Report; while there is indubitable internal proof in the document itself, of a total lack of investigation of the public documents of the Society—with the exception of a pamphlet of sixteen pages, to be noticed hereafter—all which are furnished gratuitously for the asking; and a lamentable ignorance of the extensive series of standard publications, censured without examination. Was this what you expected when you appointed a Committee for *investigation*? Were such your impressions when you adopted unanimously the document they brought before your body? Is this the method of ascertaining the relations of benevolent societies? You will pardon me a somewhat careful investigation and dissection of the document you have given to the world under such solemn sanctions. In attempting this painful task, I propose to follow the order of the Report, with the intention of meeting every important allegation with Christian candor and impartial truth.

The first topic of complaint in your Committee's Report is entitled

#### **"ALTERATION AND SUPPRESSION."**

"The first example of suppression and alteration of sentiments on the subject of slavery," say your Committee, "is in the reprint of

Cotton Mather's *Essays to do Good*. The preface to the Tract Society's edition states that 'in this edition such portions of the original essays are omitted, and such changes have been made in the phraseology as might be expected after the lapse of more than a century since the work was written.' In Cotton Mather's book, as he wrote it, occurs this sentence :

"O that the souls of our slaves were more regarded by us! that we might give a better demonstration that we despise not our own souls, by doing what we can for the souls of our slaves, [and not using them as if they had no souls! That the poor slaves and blacks which live with us may by our means be made candidates of the heavenly life!]. How can we pretend to Christianity when we do no more to Christianize our slaves?"

"The edition of the Tract Society omits the sentences in brackets, and substitutes 'servants' for 'slaves.'

"The following paragraph, which Mather wrote in the same connection, is suppressed in the Tract Society's edition : 'But if any servant of God may be so honored by him as to be made the successful instrument of obtaining from the British Parliament 'an act for the Christianizing of slaves in the plantations,'" etc., as quoted below.

To the foregoing statements, your Committee add the sarcastic comment, "Such are the changes in *phraseology* which might be expected after the lapse of more than a century." The preface as quoted by your Committee, said, "*portions of the original essays* are omitted :" your Committee say, "such are the changes in *phraseology*."

I have quoted from your report thus fully, that there may be no possible question as to the meaning of your Committee, which certainly must be that the Tract Society are responsible for the alteration or suppression of Mather's *anti-slavery* views, and that thus injury is done to the cause of freedom. The "Unanimous Remonstrance," of a part of Mr. Patton's church, citing this book as proof that "those sentences which have condemned slavery as sinful have been stricken out" by the Tract Society, "for the avowed purpose of avoiding the expression of sentiments which would be distasteful to slave-holders," is followed by your Committee, as above.

I join issue with your Committee, and with the "Unanimous Remonstrance," on every count and phase of this indictment. The book of Mather *was not altered by the Tract Society* on the subject of slavery, but was printed word for word as in Dr. Burder's abridgment of this work ; no "Tract Society's edition" of it has been issued for ten years ; the original edition *never contained anti-slavery views*, but, on the contrary, must be condemned by your Committee themselves as pro-slavery ; and the charge of alteration or suppression recoils upon the head of its authors, as I proceed to show.

So much importance has been attached to this case as to warrant the quotation *entire* of the passages in question, from the reprint of the original edition of 1710. They are as follows: the passages in brackets are omitted in "Burder's edition;" those in *italics* or small capitals are *suppressed* in your Committee's Report.

MATHER ON "THE USAGE OF SLAVES."

*"Masters, yea, and mistresses too, must have their devices how to do good unto their servants; how to make them the servants of Christ, and the children of God. God, whom you must remember to be 'your Master in heaven,' has brought them, and put them into your hands. WHO CAN TELL WHAT GOOD HE HAS BROUGHT THEM FOR? HOW IF THEY SHOULD BE THE ELECT OF GOD, FETCHED FROM AFRICA, OR THE INDIES, AND BROUGHT INTO YOUR FAMILIES, ON PURPOSE, THAT BY THE MEANS OF THEIR BEING THERE, THEY MAY BE BROUGHT HOME UNTO THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS!"*

"Oh, that the souls of our slaves were of more account with us! that we gave a better demonstration that we despise not our own souls, by doing what we can for the souls of our slaves, [and not using them as if they had no souls! That the poor slaves and blacks which live with us, may by our means be made the candidates of the heavenly life!] How can we pretend unto Christianity, when we do no more to Christianize our slaves? Verily, you must give an account unto God concerning them. If they be lost through your negligence, what answer can you make unto "God, the Judge of all?" *Methinks, common principles of gratitude should incline you to study the happiness of those, by whose OBSEQUIOUS labors your lives are so much accommodated. Certainly, they would be the better servants to you, the more faithful, the more honest, the more industrious, and submissive servants to you, for bringing them into the service of your common Lord.*

[ "But if any servant of God, may be so honored by him, as to be made the successful instrument of obtaining from a British Parliament, 'an Act for the Christianizing of the slaves in the plantations,' then it may be hoped something more may be done than has yet been done, that the blood of souls may not be found in the skirts of our nation: a controversy of heaven with our colonies may be removed, and prosperity may be restored; or, however, the honorable instrument will have unspeakable peace and joy in the remembrance of his endeavors. In the meantime, the slave-trade is a spectacle that shocks humanity.

*"The harmless nations basely they trepan,  
And barter baubles for the souls of men;  
The wretches, they to Christian climes bring o'er,  
To serve worse heathens than they did before."*]

Mass. Sab. S. Soc. Edition, pp. 101-4.

Your Committee rely on changes in *this book* as proof of the "alteration or suppression" of "sentiments which would be distasteful to slave-holders!" There is not a line in the whole pas-

sage adverse to slave-holding, not a sentiment “*distasteful to slave-holders*”—though there is just one line and a stanza reprobating the slave-trade—but it is wholly incidental to the main drift of Mather’s thought, as is seen by his introducing it with the disjunctive phrase, “In the meantime.” On the contrary, do not your Committee, and those who sympathize with them, oppose and denounce the sentiment of Mather’s “Original Essays,” that slaves are “*the elect of God, fetched from Africa, or the Indies, and brought,*”

“*To serve worse heathens than they did before,*”

“*on purpose that by the means of their being here, they may be brought home unto the Shepherd of souls?*” That kind of Calvinism savors of the South, more than of New England, just now. And would not your Committee scout the idea of Mather, that gratitude for the “obsequious labors” of slaves should incline to “bringing them into the service of your common Lord”—not to make them free—not even to prepare them for emancipation—but because “they would certainly be the more *faithful*, the more INDUSTRIOUS, and SUBMISSIVE servants to you.” Why, this is a sentiment so foreign from the literature of the anti-slavery stamp of our day, that the man who should pen it would be denounced without mercy. Yet these are the sentiments which define and control the meaning of the passage complained of for “suppression;”—and these views are *suppressed by your Committee*, that they may *make* occasion for complaint aga<sup>n</sup>st a Christian institution ! Had your Committee found two such virtually *pro-slavery* passages in the Tract Society’s books, would they not have furnished a text for numberless diatribes on the subjection of that unfortunate institution to “the slave oligarchy?” And would not your Committee have hailed *one* convincing proof of its delinquency? But your Committee have no thunders for a “leading publishing Society” of *their own denomination* for issuing the edition of Mather *containing* these very pro-slavery passages; while they denounce the Tract Society, on anti-slavery grounds, for *not* publishing these passages—or rather, for not publishing the part of them which, by mutilation, they torture into an anti-slavery sense!

I repeat the remark, as furnishing one of the most astounding illustrations of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* the world ever witnessed—that your Committee, in charging the Tract Society with “the alteration and suppression of books penned by pure and holy minds to condemn slavery,” have themselves so altered and suppressed the sentiments of their author as to make you believe, and

as to alarm the public with the belief that passages in opposition to slavery were expunged from Mather; whereas no line or sentiment of that character was in the book, but sentiments exactly the converse *were* there.

The fact seems to have escaped the thoughts of your committee that Mather lived and wrote a century and a half ago, in the midst of colonial slavery—for aught that appears in his book, himself a holder of slaves\*—and before “the great apostasy.” Then it was not fatal heresy to think and write that God may have had great designs of mercy in bringing black heathen into Christian households to be evangelized, or that a care for their souls would make them more “industrious and submissive” “slaves.” Jumping at the conclusion that whenever in a book the word “slaves” is found, the writer must be an abolitionist; and noticing that in the “Tract Society’s edition” that word did not occur so frequently, they seem to have seized the bait—and have “caught a Tartar.”

After your Report had been printed in the *Independent*, some of “the laymen of New York and Brooklyn” suggested to your committee that they should at least have been as candid as Mr. Patton was; and having borrowed their material from his “Unanimous Remonstrance,” they should have given the Tract Society the benefit of two facts stated therein, namely, that Mather’s Essays was *abridged by Rev. George Burder* in 1807, which abridged edition was followed in this country; and that the “Tract Society’s edition” was dropped

\* There are intimations in Mather’s Essays that the author *was himself a slave-holder*. In the passages quoted in the text, he speaks of “the poor slaves and blacks which live with us.” And then follows “a paper under this title, THE RESOLUTION OF A MASTER,” beginning thus:

“1. I would always remember that my servants are in some sort my children,” etc., the whole of which is consistent with the idea of his personal relationship as the “master” of slaves. The paper may or may not have been written for Mather’s personal use. But the exact reprint of the original edition contains this “note:” “These Resolutions were also doubtless written by Mather.” And Burder’s edition has a similar note: “The modesty of the author thus expresses, probably, his own production.” We leave to the reader the question of Mather’s connection with the slave system; simply quoting the appendix to these resolutions as proof that he was a humane and considerate “master,” if he was one:

“Age is well-nigh sufficient with some masters to obliterate every letter and action in the history of a meritorious life; and old services are generally buried under the ruins of an old carcass. It is a barbarous inhumanity in men towards their servants, *to make their small failings to be a crime, without allowing their past services to have been a virtue*. Good God, keep thy servant from such ingratitude. Worse than villainous ingratitude!” MATHER’s ESSAYS, page 107.

in 1845. Being partly found out, they put a patch on the pamphlet edition of their Report, intimating that Burder's edition was followed by the Tract Society, and that the book has been dropped from its catalogue ; but making a *new issue*, to this effect :

BURDER'S "NOTE."

"Burder stated in a *note*, that he had omitted *passages relating to slavery*, as being inapplicable to England. The original unaltered edition was accessible to the Publishing Committee of the Tract Society, but by following Burder, they adopted his changes, and by *dropping out his note*, they left the reader uninformed of the nature and extent of those changes ;" and yet, although the book is dropped, they say, "the changes made in it, when published, show the *settled policy of the Committee on the subject of slavery*."

In an editorial in the Independent, Oct. 18, nearly two months after your Report was unanimously adopted and printed, another shift is made, thus :

"It is due that an *exact* and *complete* statement of the *facts* should be given to the public. We will therefore state the case precisely as we understand it from *competent* and *reliable* sources. The constituency desire to know these facts for their own guidance, and surely they are entitled to know them, unless the Tract *Society* is a *fiction*."

The "facts" relate to the Tract Society's responsibility for the "note" in Burder's edition, alluded to above, respecting which they say,

"The responsibility of the administration of the Tract Society for these alterations as transferred to their edition, must be determined by three questions which admit of a categorical answer :

"Did they *know* that Dr. Burder had made alterations and omissions *on the subject of slavery*?"

"Did the copy of Burder's edition before them contain his *note*, informing the reader that he had omitted the author's *remarks on slavery*? If so, with what design was that *note* omitted while Burder was followed in his alterations? Was it because *remarks on slavery* were happily inapplicable to this country?" etc.

This, then, is "*an exact and complete statement of the facts*," after two months of supplementary investigation. The sum of all is, that Burder's "*note*, informing the reader that he had omitted the author's *remarks on slavery*," was omitted by the Tract Society. The *main fact*, without which the whole allegation is "*a sham*," namely, that there is not even the semblance of an anti-slavery sentiment in the book, is still "*suppressed*."

But that "*note*," with its announcement of "*remarks on slavery*!"

let us look at it. Are spiritual appeals to men holding slaves to care for their souls that they may be "more submissive slaves," or are paragraphs on the *treatment* of slaves, "*remarks on slavery*" as a system? Does a note referring to "the usage of slaves," mean "*remarks on slavery?*" The note to Burder's edition is as follows:

~~10~~ "In the original work, some observations are made in this place with respect to the *usage of slaves*," [that is, the *treatment* of slaves,] "but as the subject has happily no connection with our country, the passage is here omitted."

There is no more allusion to the morality of *slave-holding* or of *slavery* in the note, than there would be to *marriage*, in a note referring to the *education of children*. I will answer your Committee's "three questions," then, by asking a few:

Did they *know* that the original edition of Mather's Essays did not contain a sentiment in opposition to slavery? If they did, are they honest? If they did not, are they not reckless?

Did they know that the note to Burder's edition says nothing about "*remarks on slavery*" or "*passages relating to slavery*" as being omitted, but only alludes to observations on the "*usage of slaves?*" If they did, have they not imposed anew on the public? If they did not, what do they mean by "*an exact and complete statement of facts?*"

Did they know the fact stated in the preface to the reprint, (in 1845,) of the original edition, that the "first edition of the Essays published in 1710, was never reprinted"—out of print for one hundred and thirty-five years!—and that "it was so rare that a copy of it not long since sold at auction in Boston for about six dollars?" If they did, what ground have they for the unqualified assertion that "the original unaltered edition *was accessible* to the Publishing Committee?" If they did not, why do they write about books they never examined? [The original edition was *not "accessible,"* and was not seen.]

Did your Committee ever *see* the "original edition," or the "exact reprint" published by their own denominational concern, or even the "Note" to Burder's edition? If yea, did they examine the two pages from which they pretend to quote, and find the "pro-slavery" sentiments in connection with those respecting the "usage of slaves," which they dare not quote, and cannot endorse? If nay, what reliance can be placed on the statements of any other part of their report?

If Mather contained *pro-slavery* sentiments; and if George Burder omitted them, in the heat of the anti-slavery controversy in England

in 1807, because they were "distasteful" to abolitionists; and the Publishing Committee followed Burder's edition; and this act "shows the settled policy of the Committee on the subject of slavery," is not the whole report of your Committee and the action based upon it an absurd farce?

So many misrepresentations have clustered around this book, that it may be helpful to recapitulate: Your Committee charged the Tract Society with suppressing Mather's anti-slavery sentiments: I have cited the entire passage to show that the only color for the charge was made by the suppression on the part of your Committee of exactly opposite sentiments. Your Committee held the Tract Society to account for changes made by Burder in 1807, and for a book which they ceased to publish ten years ago, having the means of knowing that such were the facts, but concealing their knowledge until after the adoption and publication of their report. Your Committee then changed their ground, and held the Tract Society responsible for all the changes made by Burder, because "the Society's edition omits Burder's *note*, and does not in any way inform the reader that Mather's *remarks on slavery* have been suppressed." I have shown that there is no such note; but only one speaking of the "*usage of slaves*," which accords with the facts of the book. Your Committee insist that the course of the Tract Society in this case "stands as a way-mark of the policy of the Tract Society on the question of slavery." I have demonstrated that if this be so, and the Tract Society obliterates "pro-slavery" sentiments, your Committee have indicted the wrong party—they should have "arrested the action" of the publishers of Mather's "Original" Essays, if they have any consistency. Does not the whole case present one of the most remarkable instances to be found on record of "tables turned" by simple truth?

#### GURNEY.

I have occupied so much space with the review of your Committee's notice of Mather's Essays, that I dismiss their complaints of the change of four lines in *Gurney's "Love to God"* with a single remark. Your Committee and all other commentators on Gurney have "suppressed" the announcement on the title-page of the Tract Society's edition, that it is "REVISED UNDER THE SANCTION OF THE AUTHOR." The changes, wise or unwise, are Joseph John Gurney's changes, and he is responsible for them. They have been defended in the "Independent" as harmless or needless. And your Committee have overlooked or "suppressed" the fact that there are *in the same chapter* senti-

ments bearing on the slavery question which leave the author's "testimony" unquestionable, without the repetition of the illustration which is varied in the passage complained of. Your Committee can settle their account with Gurney.

MARY LUNDIE DUNCAN

I now come to the third and last "example," under this head—the memoir of *Mary Lundie Duncan*. Your Committee, in noticing the changes in this work, say, "*In the preface* we are told that a few pages which the Committee deemed of less interest to the general reader, or which alluded to *points of disagreement among evangelical Christians*, have been dropped." The reader is referred to the preface, pp. 3, 4, for proof that NO SUCH PASSAGE EXISTS THERE, nor is it to be found in any other part of the book! The only announcement is on the title-page, "ABRIDGED BY THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY."

Your Committee say, "In the original diary we find THIS ENTRY under date of August 1st."

"Freedom has dawned this morning on the British colonies. [No more degraded lower than the brutes, no more bowed down with suffering from which there is no redress.] The sons of Africa have obtained the rights of fellow-subjects—the rights of man, the immortal creation of God. [Now they may seek the sanctuary fearless of the lash ; they may call their children their own.] Hope will animate their hearts, and give vigor to their efforts. O for more holy men to show them the way of salvation ! The Lord keep them from riot and idleness ! They have been so little taught, that He only can avert confusion and tumult as the result of their joy."

Is that the *whole* of "*this entry* under the date of August 1st?" Were your committee afraid that the complete quotation would contradict the tenor of the next count in their indictment—the "Avoidance of the Subject?" Why, when they find space for twenty lines omitted by George Burder about an act of the "British Parliament," did they not find space for the seven other lines of Mary's "entry," which they profess to quote entire, and which are essential to the point at issue? Was it because the fact that there are "some Christians among their number, who will influence others," would prove that they were "*not degraded lower than the brutes?*" And must that fact be *suppressed* to suggest some consideration, other than the true one, for the omission of an extravagant representation of an "enthusiastic young lady" of nineteen? The lines suppressed by your committee are these: "*Some Christians there are among their number, who will influence the others. My poor fellow-travellers through*

*life's short wilderness, may I meet with many of you in heaven, where even I can hope to dwell, through the love of my risen Lord. There none will despise the negro, whom Jesus has pitied and redeemed."* And this in the Tract Society's edition. Had your committee examined the book—as they did *not* even the preface—they might have found the Tract Society's Mary saying, "What can *I* do for my oppressed brethren? Let me bear poor Africa on my heart, and seek a speedy emancipation for her sons, not only from the rod of the oppressor, but from the bonds of iniquity. Long have they dwelt in a night of darkness and sighing, but their cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. O may they now be rescued by his power!"

But your committee do not concern themselves with what is *in* the books, only with what is *out* of them; for they are about to show "the studious avoidance of the subject," and their plan might be thwarted if they should stumble on the facts.

Will it be claimed, with the above extracts in sight, that there is any suppression of Mary Lundie's rejoicing over the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies, or of her sympathy for those in bondage? Her "testimony" is explicit—so explicit that your committee felt constrained to suppress it in part, lest the very passage complained of should show that, "in the ordinary and natural course of its publications, the Tract Society *does* bear, with its legitimate influence, upon the system of slavery."

The *Independent* itself says of the passage, "It is permitted to appear that the subject of the memoir had an earnest sympathy with the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. Every reader, north and south, sees in a moment, on the perusal of this passage, that Mary Lundie Duncan was what is called an abolitionist. \*\* If southern public opinion can tolerate the passage as it stands in the abridgment, why may it not tolerate the passage as it stands in the original edition."

The omission of the lines complained of strengthens the testimony, rather than weakens it—for they were not true of the condition of the bondmen of the West Indies, and are not true of the bondmen of the United States—and all exaggeration is weakness. *Is it true* of a class numbering a larger proportion of professed Christians of an evangelical faith than almost any other, that they are "degraded lower than the brutes," or that they are restrained from "the sanctuary" by "fear of the lash?" And if even the *Independent* (see No. for Jan. 25, 1855) can "find no fault with the omission of passages eulogistic of Mr. George Thompson, whose standing in his

own country, among religious people, is not such that any religious Tract Society need hesitate about expunging from the diary of an enthusiastic young lady any passages, in prose or verse, expressive of her admiration of his eloquence"—there need be as little hesitation, certainly, in abridging the rejoicings in the same "diary of an enthusiastic young lady," when mistaken in fact, and exaggerated in expression.

It will thus be seen that the defence of the Society is complete without resorting to the constitutional limitations, which will be subsequently discussed.

Your Committee raise another issue respecting this book which it may be well to notice, as numberless misstatements have been made respecting it, the essence of which may be found in their report. Your Committee state that the author of Mary's Memoir "never gave even a forced consent, (to the abridgment,) till long after the change was made." The Publishing Committee state in their announcement of the book in 1852, as soon as it was issued, that it "was intrusted to the Committee by the esteemed author to be abridged for circulation by the Society, that it might thus be borne to thousands whom it would not be likely to reach in book-sellers' channels." The question of veracity which your Committee have seen fit to raise, may safely be left to the candor of the reader, and the respective position of the parties. The same article in the Independent which professed to give "an exact and complete statement of the facts" concerning Mather's Essays, gives some "facts" respecting Mary Lundie on the point now under discussion. It puts into Mrs. Duncan's mouth eight lines *in marks of quotation*, as "almost the words" "she had written from Scotland;" while the only letter she ever wrote the Tract Society, the one authorizing the Committee to abridge the work at their discretion, *contains no such words, nor any thing implying the same ideas*, nor did she ever express those ideas to any Executive officer of the Society.

What your Committee say about "a forced consent," may be intended to refer to a fact which, when fully known, ought to be final with the professed friends of Mrs. Duncan: that when one of the officers of the Society was in Edinburgh in 1853, and after the Independent and kindred journals had made an ado about the Memoir, in a personal interview with Mrs. Duncan he tendered his influence to have the Memoir dropped from the series of the Tract Society, if she preferred that course to the continued circulation of the abridged

edition: to which she replied, in substance, with characteristic warmth, "God forbid! The book is blessing thousands of habitations North and South, which it would not reach in other forms. No: let it go on, and may God bless it to many precious souls!" I pity the man or woman who cannot respond, Amen! to the sensible Christian sentiment of the mother and biographer of Mary Lundie Duncan.\*

"EXAMPLES."

In concluding this part of the review, I feel constrained to direct your attention to the injurious and disingenuous method in which these three publications are brought forward as "*examples* of alteration and suppression." "The fact of suppression has been made conspicuous in two or three prominent EXAMPLES"—"the first EXAMPLE"—"another EXAMPLE"—"still another EXAMPLE"—"and such are the EXAMPLES." What is the obvious import of this language, if it be not that your Committee were cognizant of numerous facts of the same general class, and extending through the catalogue of the Society's publications, of which those cited were fair "*examples*?" An honest merchant who exhibits a *specimen* of a class of goods, is presumed to have a stock of those goods for the market. A reviewer who singles out *examples* of the style of a voluminous author, is sup-

\* Since this paragraph was written, I have had the opportunity of verifying the essential accuracy of the statement from two independent sources. The following is an extract from a letter of the officer of the Tract Society aliuded to above, dated "Edinburgh, June 3, 1853."

"I called on Mrs. Duncan last night, with the Rev. Mr. P——. She received me kindly. \* \* \* When speaking of the memoir of her daughter, the topic being introduced by Mr. P——, I said to her, 'Mrs. Duncan, if it is your wish that your daughter's memoir should cease to be circulated in the Tract Society's channels in its present form, I will use what influence I have with the Committee, to secure its immediate suppression. However desirable it may be for the great purposes for which it was written to continue its circulation, and whatever good to souls may be effected by it, I am confident that the Committee would lay it aside, if it is your deliberate desire.'

"'By no means,' was her reply, substantially. '*I should have preferred that my daughter's views of West India emancipation had been retained; but as it is, I hope it will do good, and I AM SATISFIED.*' She has never seen our edition. Would it not be well to inclose several neat copies in Greig and Son's package; ordered herewith."

I am also permitted to make the following extract from the diary of Rev. Mr. P——, made the very evening of this conversation:

"June 2.—In the evening, called with Rev. Mr. ——, who conversed with Mrs. Duncan about the Tract Society and her memoir of Mary Lundie. After a long conversation and explanation, Mr. —— offered to write to the Publishing Committee and use his influence to have the book suppressed, if Mrs. Duncan wished it. 'O no!' she said, 'I AM PERFECTLY SATISFIED WITH IT AS IT IS. The essential features of my daughter's character are preserved, and I hope it will be useful.'"

posed to furnish what is characteristic of the writer, and would be justly considered blameworthy if the "examples" were solitary instances.

Indeed, the odium excited against the Tract Society has been caused chiefly by the impression which your report expressly sanctions, that the expurgations of Mather, Gurney, and Duncan are "examples" of a large class, if not of the whole series, of the Tract Society's issues, and that thus "a policy," is pursued, "which eliminates from the gospel, as published by the Tract Society, the heavenly spirit of equal love to all." Had your association been told, in Christian candor, that after diligent search not another example of an omission in reference to slavery has been cited; or had they conceded, as the Michigan report does—"we rejoice to say there are not many such"—would not your action have been modified, and would you not have paused before raising the cry of revolution?

It is a matter of profound surprise that so large a business can have been carried forward so long, on so small a capital. The staple of all the "letters," newspaper articles, resolutions, and reports of ecclesiastical bodies on the subject, for three years, has been found in the three books just reviewed—one of which the Society does not publish and did not alter, and had not an anti-slavery word in it to be expunged; another changed in four lines by the author himself, but still retaining his "testimony" in the same chapter, and the third so distinct in its testimony as to satisfy the Independent. Why, if your committee knew of no other omissions, did they not give the Tract Society the benefit of such a candid statement? That would have been manly and ingenuous, as compared with the five times repeated "example" of wrong-doing.

#### "AVOIDANCE OF THE SUBJECT."

Your Committee appear to suppose that they have cleared the way for their new count in the indictment of the Tract Society, namely, the "avoidance of the subject," by suppressing a portion of "the entry in Mary Lundie Duncan's diary," which shows the contrary; by omitting to notice a passage on slavery in the same chapter in Gurney on which they comment; and by converting the pro-slavery sentiments in Mather into anti-slavery sentiments—neither of which sentiments were touched by the Society. They say, "Not less evident, is the studious *avoidance* of this topic, in all the *later* publications of this Society. Some of the *earlier* publications of the Tract

Society contain incidental allusions to slavery as an evil and a sin." And again, "Of *later years* the subject of slavery has either been avoided altogether in the publications of the Society, or has been alluded to with a measured circumlocution that betrays a timid mind, and renders nugatory the passing reference." "This studious avoidance of the subject, where alone the candid discussion of it can be of any moment, is a sad evidence of that fatal spell which the great dragon of the South has cast over many good men in the land."

What is the obvious meaning of this language, if it be not that in "the *later* publications of the Society," there has been a defection from the ground of its earlier publications, which "contain incidental allusions to slavery as an evil and a sin," and which meet your Committee's requisition that it should "not be turned into a machinery of anti-slavery propagandism, nor made distinctly or prominently an anti-slavery Society, but brought to bear, with its legitimate influence, in the ordinary and natural course of its publications upon the system of slavery." So that, if it should appear that its "*later publications*" are consistent with the current issues of former years, in this behalf, the whole allegation falls to the ground.

But before entering on this discussion, allow me to ask the authority for the sweeping charge? Have your Committee found time to collate the hundred thousand pages of the Tract Society's publications, in two thousand different books and tracts, so as to speak of their own *knowledge*? Or, do they take for granted the assertions of The Congregationalist: "On this great theme an utter paralysis has fallen on them. They do not even whisper. They are as silent as the grave." Or of the Congregational Herald: "If the works it publishes contain a hint, sentence, or allusion reflecting on this institution, [slavery,] the Society weeds it out, and exterminates it, *as if* it were a reflection on some divine and sacred institution." Or of the Michigan Report: "It has preserved a *rigid silence*." But a committee of "investigation" could only be safe in any such generalization by *careful investigation*. The presumption is decidedly against their having pursued this course, however, with the positive proof before us, that even the preface of two pages in a specific volume under investigation, and from which a pretended quotation is made, had not been seen by your committee. The truth seems to be that this charge is one of a numerous class caught up from the newspapers; and even if it were true, your committee did not avail themselves of the only method of verifying it.

*Is it true that there is a special "avoidance of the subject" in "the later publications" of the Tract Society?* It certainly is not true of the books complained of by your committee, which happen to be among the "later publications." On this and other points your committee certainly cannot object to the "Independent" as authority--however they might treat the documents of the Society. And the "Independent" cites the very passage in Gurney of which your committee complain, as an "example" of the passages in which "oppression and systems of oppression are condemned, and which, as every reader must feel, are more applicable to slavery, than to any other system of injustice." I have already referred to passages unaltered in the same "later publication," with a more unmistakable import. The same journal, as previously quoted, alludes to Mary Lundie, and cites the "entry in her diary, Aug. 1," *in full* from the Tract Society's edition, to show that the Society does *not* "avoid the subject," and adds, "Every reader, north and south, sees in a moment, that Mary Lundie abhorred slavery as violating the "rights of man." Is not this a "later publication," and one of the "ordinary publications?" But the Independent of Jan. 25, 1855, occupies a whole column with the great, though simple work of Justin Edwards--till his death a member of the "Publishing Committee"--of which it says, "This [Family Bible, with notes] is a far more efficient book against slavery than any other which has yet received the *imprimatur* of the Committee. It has, as we understand, a rapid sale at the south and south-west; and it is admirably adapted to the use of readers whose literary attainments are of a humble order. How this work touches slavery, may best be shown by a few citations." Passage after passage is then cited in illustration of this remark, and the wish is expressed that a "separate tract" "might be published" therefrom, "for a wide distribution, especially in the northern states." But is not this one of "the later publications?" And if it were otherwise, the objection would be without force as applied to a series of standard publications, all of which are reprinted from year to year, and generally in more editions than one each year--and all of them without date. What foundation then is there for the sweeping charge of your committee?

#### THE REAL ISSUE.

Had your committee raised the issue that, instead of "avoiding the subject," the Publishing Committee have not gone out of the "natural and ordinary course of their publications" to discuss it, and recorded their censure because they have "not turned the Tract So-

ciety into a machinery of anti-slavery propagandism," and have "not made it distinctly or prominently an anti-slavery society," which it is the manifest end and object of the present agitation to accomplish, and on *that* issue made their appeal to your body and to all the churches in the United States and the British provinces associated with you ; and to all the members of the Society, for *revolution*—your report would have had the merit of consistency and truthfulness. *That is the real issue*: all else, to quote the elegant language with which you were led to the adoption of the report, is "a sham—a sham." It is needless to go beyond the records of your meeting for proof that the real intention of the agitators in this crusade is to precipitate the Society on the sea of sectional strife, under anti-slavery pilotage, even at the hazard of wreck and ruin. Thus in the remarkable speech which followed the reading of your report, by a "member by courtesy," may be found this pregnant passage, as quoted in the Independent and Congregationalist: "*The inauguration of a new policy would unquestionably arrest the action of the Society.* But *after long and careful thought* on the subject, he was convinced that the present policy debauches the conscience of the north and of the south, and he had come to have the *decided opinion* that if there were *no connection of Christian bodies at the north and south*, Christianity would exert twice the power at the south that it now does. \* \* The attempt to make a church or denomination "national," impairs the influence of Christianity and the gospel in respect to crime at the south. \* \* If the Committee of the Tract Society were released from the temptation to suit the *cowardice*—not the *conscience*—of the south, there would at once be freedom of action there." "Let them take care of themselves there, and find out whether they have any religion or not. And I think they have some."

Here is the real issue, boldly made, "after long and careful thought," and as a corollary from and practical application of your report. It is to "*arrest the action of the American Tract Society*," by "*the inauguration of a new policy*." It is to *denationalize* a great Christian institution by *abolitionizing* it. It is to make ten millions of men—who are so bad that we must withhold coöperation, and refrain from benevolent intercourse, and even withdraw gospel agencies from them—*better*, by leaving them to "take care of themselves, and find out whether they have any religion or not."

Here, at last, is the hinging point of this discussion: Shall the American Tract Society, "with its tried and established character for

usefulness, with its catholic evangelical basis, with its rich catalogue of publications, with its efficient system of colportage, with its hallowed memories, with its well-husbanded resources," be revolutionized in its catholic character and national position, or to use the expressive language employed in your meeting,—"*sustaining the views of the Report*"—shall the "action of the Society be arrested by the inauguration of a new [abolition] policy?" The language of your Report says, "Not." The *accoucheur* of the Report, "sustaining the views of the Report," says, "Yes." "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." One means it; the other says it. The bare knowledge that such is the real issue, will arouse from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the tropics to the Superior, through all the ranks of the churches, and from *Christian anti-slavery men themselves*, an indignant negative.

Against any such revolution, truth and justice revolt, and hold up, as a sufficient shield, the next topic of your Committee—

### "THE CATHOLIC BASIS."

The fundamental rule for the guidance of the Publishing Committee is found in the first article of the Constitution, which is as follows:

"This Society shall be denominated the American Tract Society, the object of which shall be to *diffuse a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of sinners, and to promote the interests of vital godliness and sound morality, by the circulation of Religious Tracts, CALCULATED TO RECEIVE THE APPROBATION OF ALL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS.*"

Your Committee deem it necessary to establish the point, so elaborately argued in the "Unanimous Remonstrance," that this article of the constitution "refers only to a doctrinal difference of a theological character, and to the sentiments of denominations rather than individuals." The most subtle casuistry, and, I may say, the veriest sophistry, has been employed to fix this interpretation. The facts of history, and the suggestions of common-sense, scatter these reasonings to the wind. Happily some of those who drafted the constitution are still living, and their record of the facts of its adoption is accessible. One of them states that "when the draft of the constitution was first read to the Rev. Dr. James Milnor, he proposed adding the words '*and sound morality*,' as indicating the legitimate fruit of '*vital godliness*,' which the Society would by no means undervalue, and they were unanimously agreed to." And farther,

"The first article, as adopted in March, (at a preliminary meeting,) closed with the words, 'calculated to receive the approbation of *evangelical Christians of all denominations.*'" While this article was under consideration, the lamented Rev. John Summerfield suggested that, as the Society was to be a union of *individual Christians*, and not of Christian denominations, he should like, instead of "evangelical Christians of all denominations," to substitute "*all evangelical Christians.*" Dr. Milnor, being in the chair, responded, that he should cordially concur in such a change, as indicating the true character and spirit of the Society; other members of the convention concurred; and the phrase, "**ALL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS**" was unanimously adopted.

To secure the carrying out of the principles and spirit of this catholic basis, article 6 provides that "the Publishing Committee shall contain no two members from the same ecclesiastical connection; and no tract shall be published to which any member of that committee shall object."

The careful reader will perceive that this basis is widely different from that of a church organization, and that by its own limitations this association for a specific purpose assumes no such general responsibilities as rest on the church and ministry. It is a voluntary association of individual Christians, to do a certain good by certain means—leaving its own members in other relations, and all other associations in their several relations, to promote, without hindrance, such enterprises as they please. Matters of agreement, whatever they may be, are alone befitting on such a platform. And the judgment of the Publishing Committee both as to the fact of agreement, and the expediency of action, must be unanimous and final—or there can be no security for harmony.

#### ARE POLITICAL AND AGITATING QUESTIONS EXCLUDED?

With what semblance of truth is the claim set up that matters of "*doctrinal difference of a theological character*" and "*the sentiments of denominations*" alone are excluded from this catholic platform; and that consequently it may be made the bear-garden for contending factions on questions of morality and reform! "How can two walk together except they be agreed," on other than abstract questions of theological science? Are not social and moral questions the divisive topics of our times, and of some past years—overriding all great political questions, and even hushing the din of sectarian controversy with their discordant cries? And were the planks of the Tract So-

ciety's platform so loosely laid as to make it the legitimate battle-ground for these thousand and one isms?

Your Committee seem to think so; and in their attempt to convict the Tract Society of inconsistency in the practical application of the gospel to some social and moral evils and not to others, they betray an utter want of knowledge both of what the Society has done and what it has not done. Thus, without multiplying examples, they say, "However evangelical Christians are agreed in their estimate of the sin of drunkenness and the evils of intemperance, there is among them a notorious diversity of opinion as to the remedy of these evils, and as to the principles and measures upon which the temperance reform should be conducted. Yet this does not deter the Society from publishing tracts upon *one side* of this now political and agitating question."

Craving pardon for the flat contradiction, "it *does* deter the Society from publishing tracts upon *one side* of this now political and agitating question." So long as temperance was a purely moral, and in a high sense a religious question, involving directly the well-being for time and eternity of tens of thousands of souls, it was a befitting topic of discussion in "religious tracts," and these tracts were "calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians," and have received it, so far as known, with entire unanimity. But when the "wine-question" was in dispute, and when the "Maine Law" agitation threw the subject into the whirlpool of politics, and other "political and agitating" aspects of the Reform appeared, the Tract Society was necessarily "deterred from publishing tracts upon *one side*" of those political and agitating contests—yet without any insinuation being thrown out from any quarter, we believe, that this implied hostility to temperance men, or sympathy with the liquor traffic. By common consent, the Tract Society's catholic basis seems to have been understood as restraining it from political and partisan alliances—just as, in the somewhat parallel case, it has restrained it from sectional entanglements, and from all *ists* and *isms* involving angry controversy and divisions among evangelical Christians. So general has this conviction been, that so far as known, not a dollar was ever contributed to the Society, with a view to "anti-slavery propaganda," and no tract or book on slavery was ever written for, or laid before the Publishing Committee!

That the subject of slavery has become a "political and agitating question," will not be denied. It is complicated, more or less,

with all the commercial, political, social, and religious interests and institutions of the land. It awakens more of imbibed and exasperated feeling in its discussion than any or all other political or moral questions. It sunders churches, overwhelms parties, absorbs the political and religious press, and convulses a continent. That the system involves evils of vast magnitude, is claimed by good men at the North, and conceded by good men at the South; and that is nearly the limit of approximation in sentiment among evangelical Christians. As to the nature and extent of these evils, and especially the remedy for them, few men either at the North or South, are agreed. It cannot be asserted with any positiveness, that the limit of agreement among evangelical Christians extends beyond the sentiments contained in the Tract Society's series. Or, if it does, it would not be easy to show that sound wisdom, or the claims of Christian duty, or the best good of the slave, would demand the "inauguration of a new policy" which would "*arrest the action of the Tract Society*" in its beneficent work, at a time and in circumstances which imperiously call for centripetal more than for centrifugal agencies, and for vigorous evangelization, more than for new elements of disintegration and discord. It may be argued that there ought to be such unanimity of sentiment as would warrant the "inauguration of a new policy." If so, is there such unity? Where is it exhibited? What proof that it exists? What overwhelming proof, in the endless divisions and agitations of our day, that the "inauguration of this new policy" would be at the expense of the peace, prosperity—nay, the very existence of the Tract Society; or, if it lingered, would it not be with a broken constitution, a violated faith, and a perjured conscience?

#### "THE COMMITTEE'S DEFENSE."

Probably no portion of the Report of your Committee made a more profound sensation in your body than that occupying two-thirds of a column as printed in the Independent, entitled, "The Committee's Defense." There is certainly none that exhibits more ingenuity. It is but justice to say, that this part of the report is original, and is not taken from Jay or Patton. Your Committee say,

"Most humiliating, too, is the defence of its policy which the officers of the Tract Society have *lately issued*. Several churches, associations, religious journals, and private individuals, members of the Society and contributors to its funds, having remonstrated with the Executive Committee upon their policy on the subject of slavery, the

Committee have at length issued a document by way of vindication, entitled, 'Principles and Facts of the American Tract Society.' This reply is a beautiful specimen of typography, embellished with a very pretty picture of the Tract House. But the document itself is a most remarkable illustration of the timid policy of the Committee upon the subject of slavery. *It ignores the very question at issue.* Only by the most remote allusion does it recognize any dissatisfaction with the course of the Committee on slavery—a system which it does not so much as name in a tract of sixteen pages. That allusion is in the following terms: 'This Society was formed by Christians of various denominations, to publish the great evangelical truths in which they are agreed. It is thus precluded from publications involving subjects of controversy among evangelical Christians. Nor can topics of a local or sectional character be expected in the issues of a national catholic institution.'

"The remainder of this document treats entirely of the material interests of the Tract Society, of its mechanical arrangements, its evangelical character, and its general work; repeating the common-places of every annual report, of every sermon by secretary or agent, and of almost every number of the American Messenger."

We have proof, at last, that during the year of your Committee's investigations, one of the two thousand publications of the Tract Society has been found in their hands; and without stopping to notice the "alteration and suppression" by which the passage they pretend to quote is garbled and mutilated—excluding the formal statement of the constitutional basis of the Society, and annulling the testimony as to the harmonious working of the union principle; and without questioning the omniscience of your committee, who claim to know the contents of "*every* sermon by secretary or agent"—I proceed to examine the mode of treatment accorded to this alleged "defence of the Committee."

#### HOW THE "DEFENSE" IS TREATED.

If it were a "Defense," one would think that an official document from a source at least respectable, would be entitled to respectful dealing in an official report to a ministerial body—especially if it might be regarded as the only "answer" to a persistent assault of three years from "several churches, associations, religious journals, and private individuals." The seven lines quoted from the document as furnishing the whole of the "Committee's Defence" would of course be discussed with candor, and the simple principles they announce might have been controverted by fair argumentation. Instead of this, your Committee, with solemn Christian and ministerial vows upon them, in the presence of a body of ministers of the gospel of truth

and peace, having set up a man of straw, catechize him after this fashion :

“ Good men, men of standing in the church and in society, whole churches and associations, the religious press, all ask of the Society, ‘ Why do you not, in some of your many thousand publications, condemn that systematic wrong which defrauds the laborer of his hire ? ’ ”

“ *The Committee answer*—‘ The Tract House at 150 Nassau-street, is eighty feet by ninety-four, and five stories high, besides basement for storing paper, and cellar for coal, p. 1.’ ”

“ The inquirers ask, Why do you not in some of your varied publications, enforce the duty of teaching all men to read, of giving all men the Bible ; and condemn the crime of keeping any from the light of God’s word ? ”

“ *The Committee answer*—‘ The Society employs 619 colporteurs, and publishes more than 200,000 copies of the Family Christian Almanac, p. 9.’ ”

And the same witty dialogue is carried on through half a column of your Report, as published in the Independent. Instead of occupying the space with quoting it in full, suppose this kind of logic should be applied in other quarters, thus :

Numberless readers of religious newspapers having “ the largest circulation in the world,” finding little else than sectional and sectarian controversy in their columns, turn their famishing souls to the neglected Bible, and ask, “ What must I do to be saved ? ”

The Bible “ answers ”—“ Dan, and Naphthali, Gad, and Asher,” Exodus, chap. 1 : 4. “ At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar.” 1 Chronicles, chap. 26 : 18.

The inquirers ask, Why does not the “ religious press ” have some *religion* in it, and where can we find a newspaper that does not “ crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

The *Independent* “ answers ”—“ The New York Picayune is the most original comic paper now published in America. Each number contains from four to six illustrations, being hits at the times, *Quizzible and Risible*. It contains the quaint and satirical lectures of Mr. Julius Caesar Hannibal, the greatest darkey lecturer of the day.” *Independent*, p. 21, A. D., 1855.

The ingenuity of a school-boy might overwhelm any antagonist with the number and variety of these ludicrous citations ; and infidelity has not been sparing of this low and vulgar logic. But is it worthy of Christian men and Christian bodies in the pursuit of truth ? Your Committee seem to have had a twinge of something like conscience, for they add the comment, “ *We have not caricatured the doc-*

ument issued from the Tract House as a virtual reply to the inquiries and remonstrances of thousands of friends of the Society, as to its policy on the subject of slavery."

WHAT THE "DEFENSE" REALLY IS.

But it is time to show what this "Defense of the Committee" is, which has been made the butt of ridicule, and the scorn of your Committee. The Tract Society, like every other institution, has been accustomed from its foundation, to have for convenient circulation, a brief document setting forth the principles of its organization and the facts of its work. Six or eight years ago the substance of the pamphlet of sixteen pages was issued in twelve pages, without a cover, "embellished with a very pretty picture of the Tract House," and tens of thousands were circulated by colporteurs and agents. After various revisions, the document being out of date, was revised in 1854, and a cover put on it, and what had no name other than "the American Tract Society," under the "pretty picture," was entitled "Principles and Facts of the American Tract Society." It was printed in 1854 in 200,000 numbers of the American Messenger, and sent by mail to every minister of the gospel in the land whose address was known, as a means of information, and an agency for enlisting benevolent aid. If it was a "Defense of the Committee," they did not know it, until told by your Committee. The fact that "it ignores the very question at issue" weakens somewhat the testimony of your Committee on this point; and perhaps would have justified your Committee in their daily walk past the Tract House in inquiring within, how long it had been published? and what its object was? before *assuming* that it was "lately issued," and that "at length the Executive Committee have issued a document by way of vindication?" or, if this involved too much *investigation*, they might surely have referred to the files of the "Independent," where, nearly a year ago, in discussing the very matter now in hand, the editors make a respectful allusion to "*a little pamphlet recently published, (Principles and Facts of the American Tract Society,)*" from which they quote a paragraph, without mutilation, to show "what it (the Society) has done in relation to slavery." But the editors, though calling loudly and often for a "vindication" or a "reply" or an "answer," had not *then* made the sapient discovery that a pamphlet which "ignores the whole subject," and which was *then* "recently published," was "the Committee's Defence" "lately issued" in the September following!

Your Committee wax indignant, and are "lofty like Luther," in

their denunciation of "such an *answer* as is given in this pamphlet to the respectful inquiries of thousands of the supporters of the Society," which, they say, "however well meant, is little less than an *insult* to the understanding of the Christian public." I cannot descend to the exchange of opprobrious epithets with your Committee; but I submit whether it is not something *more* than "an insult to the understanding of the Christian public," for a committee of *investigation* to misrepresent the object, and caricature the contents, and bring contempt upon the authors of a benevolent appeal of a Christian institution, when their own organ, in its own editorials, furnished the materials of disproving every allegation and witticism they have manufactured out of the only document or publication of the Tract Society they seem to have examined.

Your Committee's attempt to mend the matter when they discovered, after its "unanimous adoption," but before the publication of the report, that they had made an egregious blunder, to say the least—by announcing in the Independent that "since the report was in type, we have heard it alleged that the pamphlet entitled 'Principles and Facts of the American Tract Society,' is a stated issue, revised from year to year,"—only adds to their confusion. For they say, "But it will be found on examination to contain the substance of what has appeared in the Messenger and elsewhere on the part of the Publishing Committee, with obvious reference to the state of public feeling towards the Society." But did not their report reproach that very committee for not having "the magnanimity to give a reason for their silence?" Did they not speak of the appearance of "*a document at length* issued by way of vindication;" implying that nothing had appeared "in the Messenger and elsewhere," of that nature?

#### "EFFECTS OF THIS POLICY."

Your Committee are entitled to the honor of inaugurating a new philosophy, if not "a new policy." Cause for effect, effect without cause, and cause without effect, are interchanged and transposed with surprising facility. They say, "This policy of omission, suppression, and evasive silence on the subject of slavery, which may be fairly said to characterize the present administration of the Tract Society, tends to degrade the moral sense of Christians at the south, with reference to that system of iniquity, which they should labor continually to abolish." And your Committee revert again to Gurney and Lundie Duncan as their *only* illustrations. I have shown conclu-

sively that both are unmistakable in their incidental testimony against slavery and the slave-trade. I have shown that Mather's Essays, in the form in which your Committee demand their publication might "degrade the moral sense of Christians at the South," while Burder's edition, now complained of, could not have any such tendency. I have shown that there has been no "evasive silence." Your Committee then, are without premises for their conclusions, without causes for alleged effects, without facts as even the basis for their fictions. Now, more, they charge upon the Tract Society the consequences of their own and their associates' relentless war upon the South, and seek to shift the responsibility of a natural and inevitable reaction in southern feeling caused by the fanatical zeal of some northern men, and northern papers, upon a Christian institution steadily pursuing its appropriate work! Your Committee have the assurance to arraign the Tract Society for "helping to create that vicious and arrogant public sentiment *for* slavery, before which this great Society now bows in humiliating silence!" How? When? Where? The only proof of this fiction is itself a fiction: and so is the assertion that Carter's edition of Mary Lundie is "challenged at the South," *because* of the Tract Society's abridgment; whereas the interruption to its circulation, if any, is more certainly caused by the exaggerated and false impressions made by such statements as are contained in their report.

Your Committee were charged with the duty of investigating the relations of the American Tract Society, and other institutions, to slavery. They have reached the vital point of the question, and are discussing the "effects" of the policy "which may be fairly said to characterize the present administration of the Tract Society;" and here, if anywhere, you would naturally expect a candid allusion to those general reformatory relations of evangelizing, converting agencies, which Christians and Christian ministers have been wont to claim as one of the glories of the gospel. I confess my astonishment at the total silence of your Committee on this point. If I did not feel confident that it was the result of that intense one-idea-ism which ardent minds are liable to, especially when conscientiously wrong, I should fear lest political and philanthropic alliances had seduced your Committee from their evangelical affinities, and that we must mourn over new wrecks of character and of faith on the strands of scepticism. And my amazement is the more profound, that your Committee could not discover in all their investigations, one relieving fact, one redeeming element, one hopeful influence of the Tract Society's wide-

spread labors at the South ; inasmuch as I recal a series of *editorial* articles in the *Independent*, so full, and explicit, and candid in their exhibitions of the real and obvious effects of these labors, as to have neutralized the influence of their subsequent complaints. And I could not help thinking that an elaborate report to an ecclesiastical body ought to be as candid and truthful as newspaper editorials. But perhaps the "responsibility" of editors does not extend even to the *reading* of their own columns.

#### THE INDEPENDENT CITED AGAINST THE REPORT.

At the hazard of prolixity, allow me to cite some proofs of the "omission, suppression, and evasive silence" of your Committee as to "the effects of the policy which may fairly be said to characterize the present administration of the Tract Society," drawn from the only quarter which your Committee may regard as authoritative—the editorial columns of the *Independent*. And lest it should be thought that the quotations are made from inconsiderate and rash articles, it is due to your Committee to cite the announcement which immediately precedes the quotations, as follows: "It is no caprice which moves us to take up the discussion of this subject. We take up the business deliberately, with a full sense of the importance of what we are doing, and not unmindful of the consequences," etc. O that your Committee had "taken up the business" with the same deliberation, and with the same regard for consequences ! It would, at least, have rendered this long review needless.

"We honor the American Tract Society," say the editors of the *Independent*, Jan. 11, 1855. "We thankfully acknowledge its great usefulness, and especially its usefulness in the southern and southwestern states. We believe it is doing, indirectly, more than any other institution—more than could be done directly, by twenty anti-slavery societies—in the great work of teaching the slaves to read, and of raising them, with their masters, to the stage of civilization in which their emancipation will be an irresistible necessity." Could not your Report have quoted such a paragraph from the *Independent*, as easily as it copied bitter things from Jay's letter ? But it might have weakened the force of the cry for revolution !

The very next number of the *Independent* employs three columns in showing the "effects of this policy," and a few quotations will be apposite. Thus, when combating the sentiment of the superiority of the slaveholding states, as compared with the free, in the abundance of religious privileges, the *Independent* says, "The most pe-

remptory refutation of the statements and arguments now referred to, may be gathered from its (the Tract Society's) reports and other publications, in which it presents to patriotic and Christian minds its plans and its labors. For example, in a little pamphlet recently published, (Principles and Facts,) they say, 'The southern and southwestern states present a wide and important field,' etc. [Here is the "Tract of 16 pages," which in January, is characterized as "presenting to patriotic and Christian minds the Tract Society's plans, and its labors;" and in August, is caricatured as "the Committee's Defense"—"recently published," in January, and "lately issued," in August!] And the Independent adds to its extended quotation from the documents of the Society, the comment, "Every year—perhaps we might say every month—the Society is laying before thoughtful and conscientious people throughout the whole extent of our common country, just such statements as these, concerning the ignorance, the irreligion, the poverty, the very barbarism of counties and districts, and masses of population at the South." (And the editor might have added, *at the North and West, too.*) "*All this has a momentous bearing on the ever-agitated subject of slavery*"—though your Committee of investigation did not perceive it. "So far as these statements are read by thinking people in the southern states," the Independent proceeds, "society there is growing conscious of its own wants; and in proportion as southern society becomes conscious of its own wants, it must needs become silently conscious of the great evil by which it is thus darkened and depressed. On the other hand, the effect of these continually iterated statements on religious people at the North, is an ever-spreading and deepening abhorrence of slavery as an institution in society. Clergymen especially, of various denominations, read these statements, and retain the impression of them. They receive these statements not with the necessary suspicion with which they hear an anti-slavery lecture, or read the publications of anti-slavery societies, but with undoubting confidence in the competence and credibility of the witnesses. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that, to the masses of testimony continually given by the Tract Society in this undesigned and incidental way, not less than to any other influence, the clergy of the North are indebted for that unanimity of abhorrence with which they look upon every project for the extension of slavery into new territories," etc.

Why, if your Committee had not the magnanimity to acknowledge their indebtedness to the Tract Society, as the Independent does, for

awakening "the ever spreading and deepening abhorrence of slavery" at the North, had they not the candor to recognize this "momentous bearing on the ever-agitated subject of slavery" at the South, as presented in the columns of their own organ?

But this is not all. The Independent says, "The operations of the American Tract Society in the slave-holding states are constantly and powerfully counteracting the natural effects of slavery there, and aiding the action of all the influences that will ultimately accomplish the abolition of slavery. We are far from imputing such an intention to the managers or servants of the Society."

Well, we are not discussing "intentions," but "effects." *Your Committee assert* that the effect of the "policy which fairly characterizes the present administration of the Tract Society is to debase the moral sense of southern Christians, to help create a vicious and arrogant public sentiment *for* slavery," and of course to retard its removal; and not a line in the report intimates that there are any qualifications or drawbacks to these "effects;" while *the Independent asserts* that the same policy "constantly and powerfully counteracts the natural effects of slavery, and aids the action of all the influences that will ultimately accomplish the abolition of slavery." The report asserts a debasing influence on the *South*: the Independent claims an enlightening influence not only on the South, but also on the *North*.

#### MORE FROM THE INDEPENDENT.

The Independent further concedes that "the Tract Society is doing a great work among the enslaved population," and says, "No intelligent person, acquainted with the fascinating books for children which the colporteurs are vending and giving away so abundantly, can doubt that where such books are in the hands of children and illiterate white persons living in the midst of slaves, and in habits of constant and friendly intercourse with them, every slave of ordinary capacity, in whom the grace of God has awakened a desire to read the word of God, or whose mind under whatever impulse, aspires toward intellectual development, can easily learn the alphabet. No man can doubt that where white children and adults, equally unlettered with the slaves around them, are rejoicing in that excitement which attends the acquisition of the power to read, and in that conscious growth of the mind which comes of reading what the mind can feed upon—the slaves are also learning to read, and rising with sure and steady motion in the scale of intellectual and moral develop-

ment. The Tract Society is a great educator in these regions ; 'the schoolmaster is abroad' there in the person of the colporteur. How the colporteur teaches people to read may be seen in the following specimen." (Here follows a fact from a colporteur's report.) And the Independent continues : "Could not a slave learn to read in the same way ? Are not thousands of them learning to read where those beautiful little books from Nassau-street are scattered like 'leaves in Val-lambrosa ?' etc.

Is it to be understood by the "evasive silence" of your Committee as to all these matters which appear to the editors of the Independent to have some relations to the subject assigned to them, that your Committee dissent from the Independent, or that it is of no account as to their ulterior objects that a grand and peaceful system of popular education for black and white is "abroad," with its elevating power ? And even if there were such discordances between your Committee and the editors, might not your Committee have intimated to your body, that some weak persons at the North did entertain some such views, and thus have given the Tract Society the benefit of a doubt whether they were doing unmixed evil ?

But I have not done with the Independent's opposition to the views of your report. The editors continue : "The Tract Society is doing a great work for those portions of the white population in the southern states who have been most depressed and degraded by the institution of slavery. These poor whites are found everywhere ; they are the materials of which mobs are made. But by a natural pressure they are partially crowded out of the rich plantation counties into the "back counties," where slave-labor cannot be profitably employed. In these districts it is that the Tract Society finds its most inviting and hopeful field of action. Thus the American Tract Society is the true southern-aid society. Unembarrassed by any sectarian, [sectional,] or ecclesiastical relations, it brings new light and a new life and power to the aid of whatever church arrangements it finds in existence. Its books fall into the hands of ministers who have just learning enough to read them ; and these ministers find themselves brought into contact with Edwards, Doddridge, Baxter, Owen, and a host of gifted minds raised up in successive ages for the guidance and advancement of the church. The same books, and others far more elementary, find currency among the people, get established in many a household, and waken the old and the young to new ideas. The consequence is . . . , *revivals of religion take place.* *Sunday-schools are*

established. Secular-schools follow. Newspapers begin to circulate;—the American Messenger first—others of a more miscellaneous character afterwards. Thus a great change, religious, moral, intellectual, and ultimately political, is slowly taking place in these communities.” But your Committee ignore it all!

Would that I had space for the “illustrations” of this subject from the documents of the Society, of which the editors of the Independent quote a full column. But I must content myself with their comments on them, which follow: \*

“Now we hold, and we are confident that every intelligent person must admit, that where such work is going forward in the impoverished and benighted districts of the South, the day is approaching when the political domination of the slave-holding interest must be greatly weakened. These poor people as they grow in knowledge, and as their communities are more and more pervaded with the spirit of religious awakening and progress, as they take the business of their own improvement and advancement more and more into their own hands, feeling more and more that it is the greatest of their interests, will grow more truly democratic—will gradually throw off the yoke of a slave-holding oligarchy, and will be felt as a force in the legislation and government of their own states and the Union. As they come into a sort of communion and intercourse with evangelical Christendom at large by familiarity with those books of religious experience which are classical with all the churches of the free states and of Great Britain, [how can they when the “inauguration of a *new policy* arrests the action of the Tract Society?”] and know that those books, however expurgated for their use, were written by men whose feelings and opinions were wholly adverse to slavery, they will outgrow that fanatical horror of ‘abolition’ by means of which their demagogues in church and state are now ruling them. The American Tract Society, without any distinct aim or purpose in that direction, is contributing powerfully to the ultimate abolition of slavery.”

Such are the convincing proofs of the “omission, suppression, and evasive silence” of your Committee, gathered from the columns of the Independent as to the “effects of this policy.” May I not ask if the views thus presented are not quite as important as a rehash of their own and others’ mistaken accounts of changes in Gurney and Duncan, which form the *only* basis of their sweeping and unfounded charge, that the Tract Society has “debased the moral sense of

southern Christians" and "helped to create that vicious and arrogant public sentiment *for* slavery, before which this great Society of evangelical Christians bows in humiliating silence?"

I leave the editors of the Independent to settle their differences among themselves, and their differences with your Committee. The only sensible solution seems to be, that in January, the Independent was seeking for *truth*: in August, your Committee were seeking a *revolution*.

#### "THE REMEDY."—REVOLUTION.

Your Committee, borrowing the suggestion from the usages of *political* demagogues, recommend that "the members of the Society, severally or in companies, address to each member of the Publishing Committee, and to the Secretaries, the simple inquiry: Are you in favor of bringing the influence of the American Tract Society, through its ordinary publications to bear against the system of American slavery?" etc. "If this question shall be answered in the affirmative, the course of the Society in future will be plain. If in the negative, on the part of any or all the members of the Committee, or of the Secretaries, let there be at the annual election of the Board of Directors a *vote* equivalent to a vote in the British Parliament of 'want of confidence in the existing ministry.'" How naturally *political* precedents suggest themselves to your Committee, while laying their revolutionary plans! That this language means REVOLUTION, and nothing else, is clear from the remark intended to smother the scruples of some men who may be supposed to retain a respect for life-long fidelity to the cause of God—"There is no reason why an officer of any benevolent Society, however valuable his services, or however estimable his character, should have a life-lease of his office, or should be continued in that office for form's sake, when he is unwilling to conform the policy of the institution to the known wishes of the great body of his constituents."

Your Committee would have all the members of the Society, "severally or in companies address *each* member of the Publishing Committee and the Secretaries;" and every inquiry must of course have a reply, or there will be a new score of complaints opened for courtesy and "evasive silence." There are about twelve thousand members. Should only half the whole constituency follow the advice of your Committee, and write individually, it would make fifty-four thousand letters to be written, and of course the same number of

replies to be sent. If we suppose each person addressed to write fifty letters a day—which is a pretty good day's work—it would require one hundred and twenty days each for nine men, to perform the task imposed by your Committee—rather a heavy burden, one would think, to add to the thirty years of gratuitous and unrequited toil of the Publishing Committee—to say nothing of the labors of the Secretaries. Meanwhile, what is to become of the proper work of the Committee and Secretaries? Of that your Committee seem not to have thought.

"THE GENERAL CHRISTIAN SENTIMENT."

But there is an *assumption* running through this and other parts of your Committee's report, which underlies and taints the whole document, namely, that "the known wishes of the great body of constituents," that "the Christian sentiment of the supporters of the Tract Society," that "the general Christian sentiment of their constituents," are in conflict with the "policy which may *fairly* be said to characterize the present administration of the Tract Society on the subject of slavery," and are in harmony with the spirit and aims of your Committee's Report. Some men think they are turning the world upside down when they are only *turning upside down in the world*. What shadow of proof have your Committee of the correctness of their generalization? What data for their wholesale assumption?

During the past three or four years a relentless war has been waged on the Tract Society by a few public journals, and the utmost efforts have been made to sap the foundations of public confidence in its character. A mode of assault has been adopted wholly unwarrantable. Is it too much to say of this crusade, that "judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment." With the patience of martyrdom, the Tract Society has borne and forborne to the last; like the Master it owns and honors, when it "was reviled, it reviled not again; when it suffered, it threatened not; but committed itself to him that judgeth righteously." It has pursued its course of quiet unobtrusive usefulness with the vain hope that a *one-sided* and groundless controversy would sometime have an end; and with the belief that "if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God"—more acceptable than to

add to the elements of strife by a vindication which must necessarily implicate the character of good but mistaken men. It has been an anomalous and a sublime spectacle of Christian patience and forbearance.

What has been the result? The giving, praying friends of the Society have adhered to it. During the year of bitterest persecution—which was also a year of unexampled financial and commercial embarrassment, and almost of famine—the donations to the treasury were *increased*: and it was only after this result that the tactics of the complainers took the direction of discouraging the starvation regime. Now while such a result may be no certain criterion of public sentiment, it is certain that an opposite result would have been plead as proof positive of wide-spread disaffection.

#### SENTIMENT OF COLLEGES, NEWSPAPERS, AND ECCLESIASTICAL BODIES.

Our institutions of secular and sacred learning are supposed to furnish some index of the “general Christian sentiment” on great questions of Christian morals; but with the single exception of Oberlin, there is no evidence that the professors of any evangelical college or theological seminary in the land are in sympathy with the objects of your Committee and their associates.

The periodical press, especially the religious press, is believed to reflect somewhat accurately the “general Christian sentiment” of the country and of “the Society’s constituents.” But it is a somewhat impressive fact, that not a single religious journal in the land, disconnected from the denomination with which your Committee are associated, (and but half of those,) not a single Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran, Dutch or German Reformed paper has been known to utter a word of sympathy with your movement, or has recorded a complaint of the policy of the present administration of the Tract Society on the subject of slavery. The newspapers which have made all this noise, without a single echoing voice from the real organs of “the general Christian sentiment,” can all be counted on the fingers of both hands, if not on a single hand. When men profess to be the exponents of the “general Christian sentiment” which is to influence a catholic institution, they should rise out of the atmosphere of their own sectional and sectarian position, to the clearer, if not purer region of an evangelical brotherhood.

The action of ecclesiastical bodies gives some clue to “the known wishes of the great body of constituents” of a religious charity: would that it were always a reliable one! Yet this test fails to re-

veal any general or considerable lack of confidence in the "present administration of the Tract Society," or any common sympathy with revolutionary designs. It is true that a few of the lesser Congregational bodies have spoken, with more or less severity of rebuke, of what they had been made to believe was wrong in the Tract Society's policy, under the same kind of leadership, and with the same sort of misrepresentations which induced your own action. Five or six churches in Connecticut have "protested" against what the Religious Herald *said* was wrong; and the General Association of that state passed a harmless resolution to satisfy the clamor of a few restless spirits. The General Convention of Vermont have the matter under advisement, and will undoubtedly act with caution. The General Conference of Maine, with their accustomed Christian prudence, have refrained from condemning a Christian charity unheard. The General Association of Massachusetts, after investigation and discussion, refused to commit themselves to the new measures. Some Western Congregational Associations, local and general, partly under the same leadership and influences brought to bear on you, have passed resolutions in harmony with your action. And this is the utmost extent of ecclesiastical action in the premises. But were these *œcumical* councils, even for the limited districts they represent? Were they not the minor and inconsiderable bodies of a *single denomination*—composed of small delegations chosen for other objects—which, however respectable, will hardly claim to be the church, or to represent "the *general* Christian sentiment of the Society's constituents?" And even many of these acted under erroneous impressions as to facts, and in a season of great political excitement on the very question involved in their blind censure of the Tract Society. Does any man believe that all, or any of them, would repeat their action with no more than the facts of this letter before them? Or, will any one claim that all, or either of these bodies, would or could have acted as they did, if, like the ecclesiastical bodies of nearly all other denominations, there had been a *lay representation* in them?

I repeat, and would emphasize the remark, that what is claimed as "the *general* Christian sentiment," is the voice of the minority of the ministers alone, of a single denomination. If a single Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly, of any branch of the great Presbyterian family of churches, has, directly or indirectly, given utterance to a word of dissent to the "policy of the present administration of the Tract Society on the subject of slavery," or of sympathy with the

views of your Committee; or if any other of the evangelical ecclesiastical organizations of the country, great or small, has uttered any thing on this subject, I have been so unfortunate as not to have known it. No. Your Committee count without their host, when they seek to rank with themselves, either the great body of ministers or people of their own denomination, or of that grand constituency which numbers hundreds of thousands of the pious and the liberal and the faithful of the great evangelical family.

It is but justice to the noble band of Christians who are embraced in the Congregational communion itself, to release them, as a body, from all responsibility for the acts and influence of a few journals sailing under their flag. Even the comparatively few who have suffered themselves to be misled and imposed upon, will be the first to renounce, if not to denounce, the false lights which have seduced them from their fealty to a true and blessed cause. They love truth and right, and peace and unity, and evangelism. And both ministers and people of the Congregational churches, especially in New England, will recoil with horror from the responsibility of revolutionizing a Society which they have long fostered and loved, at the call of a Committee who must stand convicted of grosser misdeeds than a single document, than they allege, and falsely allege, to have been committed in a third of a century, by the Society they would revolutionize.

#### APPEAL TO COUNTRY MEMBERS.

Before dismissing this topic, it may be well to notice briefly one or two of the statements made at your meeting, intended to stimulate the zeal of *country members* of the Society, for a revolution in its official management. Thus, it was asserted that "affairs are conducted in a close, secret way, by the Tract managers." "The business of electing Directors and an Executive Committee was crowded into the hour immediately preceding the anniversary addresses. It was all 'a sham,' 'a sham,' as it is now conducted." Pray, how would these gentlemen have the business conducted? The arrangements for election have always been made with the view of accommodating the largest number of the constituents of the Society. A change was made at the last anniversary from the closing hour of the public meeting to the hour preceding the anniversary, and full public notice given, because it had been intimated that it would afford more full opportunity for discussion. The arrangement is similar to that of the American Bible Society. The hour has hitherto been found more than enough to transact all the business; and if more time were ne-

cessary, a motion for adjournment to an hour when it would be more convenient for the Society's friends, would always be in order. What is meant by "a close and secret way of conducting affairs," I do not understand. The friends of the Society may know at any time any of its affairs, if they will take the pains to inquire; and once a year, in its Annual Report, they do know all of them, if they take the trouble to read.

Another motive to revolution was presented in your body thus: "The present officers don't mean to surrender their trust—perhaps would try to keep the building by process of law." "*This building is ours*, they will tell you, and *you Johnny Raw*s from the country may pay your money, but we will lay it out as it suits *us*." Another version of the reporters is as follows: "Whenever the givers shall rise and appoint a new Committee, it will be found that the present managers will not give way, but will insist that the Tract House was built with *New York* money, and is owned in *New York*, and that people in the country have no right to do any thing but *give their funds*." [I cannot bring myself even to notice such language as "cowards," "cowardice," etc., applied to the Publishing Committee in your presence. Gentlemen don't use or hear such epithets.]

Now see how this new version of the fable of the "three black crows" gained currency. In the first Annual Report, in 1826, the Committee say, "All the donors to the Society's House reside in the city of *New York*, and all the funds appropriated to that object have been contributed for that explicit purpose. *Not only are none of the funds contributed for the general objects of the Society* appropriated to the erection of the House, but the Society is presented with the use of it, rent free, from and after the first day of this month," p. 19. In the second Report, (1827,) the Committee say, "The Society bears no expense of rent for the House, erected by the liberality of the citizens of *New York*," etc., p. 15. In almost every public document of the Society for thirty years, the statement has been reiterated, with the simple and sole object of apprising *contributors in every part of the country* that *their benefactions would be applied directly to the benevolent work of the institution*, and not to the building necessary for its accommodation, which had been provided by the liberality of Christians in the city where it is located. The pamphlet entitled, "Facts and Principles" repeated this statement, in connection with other introductory statements as to the Society's "material interests" on the first page, originally bearing a picture of the Tract House; in the

following form : "The building was erected in 1825, the year the Society was formed, by funds contributed in New York," etc.

A writer in the *Independent* devotes a column and a half to the exposure of the Tract Society's dishonesty in speaking of its "material interests" at the beginning of the document, which his morbid imagination has converted into "*a tract for the times*:" "*just issued*" with a jesuitical design ; and he too becomes "lofty like Luther" in his denunciation of the bravado of the Tract Society in thrusting forward the *Tract House* as belonging to New York, and as being a Malakoff which all the forces of New England cannot conquer ! When this amiable tale gets before the New York General Association, and the conspirators wish to awaken jealousy of metropolitan influence as a makeweight in their desperate game, you are told that "the present officers don't intend to surrender their trust—perhaps would try to keep the building by process of law." "This building is ours, they will tell you, and you Johnny Rawls from the country may pay your money, but we will lay it out as it suits us!"

Can that be a righteous cause that needs such aids ? Can a Christian institution be revolutionized by such means ?

#### RECAPITULATION.

I have done with the report of your Committee to investigate "the relation of the American Tract Society to slavery." I have shown that it is *not* the report of "the Committee" you appointed ; that it does not present the results of careful investigation, but of prejudiced suspicions and cavils ; that the charge of "suppression and alteration of sentiments on the subject of slavery" is unfounded—*Mather's "Essays"* never having had an anti-slavery sentiment in it to be altered or suppressed ; the changes having been made half a century ago by Burder in England—without any *such note* as your Committee allege ; the Tract Society's edition having been dropped ten years since, for reasons wholly foreign from this subject ; and the original edition being a pro-slavery book ;—*Gurney's* work having been revised by the author, and being still what your Committee say it is not ;—*Mary Lundie Duncan* having been entrusted to the Committee by the author to be abridged, and leaving her testimony too unquestionable for the purposes of your Committee—so that in this, as in all the other works complained of, your Committee are themselves guilty of "suppression and alteration." I have shown that instead of the "avoidance of the subject of slavery in all their *later* publications"—which your Committee could not have known if it

were true—the very publications they complain of disprove their allegation, and the Independent itself demonstrates the converse of their proposition ; and that the *real issue* involves “the inauguration of a new policy which would unquestionably arrest the action of the Society,” and denationalize it by abolitionizing it, thus abandoning the South “to take care of itself;” and that such a revolutionary and suicidal policy would be resisted by good men everywhere, and must be precluded by *the catholic basis*.

I have shown that this basis, as appears from its palpable import and its history, is not restricted in its scope to “doctrinal differences of a theological character” and “denominational sentiments,” but that more divisive questions even, of morals and reform, are necessarily excluded ; and that consequently the Society *is* and has been deterred from “publishing Tracts upon *one side* of political and agitating questions”—that slavery is such a question, and that the fundamental principles of the Society preclude it from being “turned into a machinery of anti-slavery propagandism,” though it may and does, “in the natural and ordinary course of its publications,” especially in its “later publications,” allude to its evils in terms of decided reprehension ; and that, if the Society has not given full expression to the united sentiment of evangelical Christians on this subject, “the inauguration of a new [abolition] policy” “*would arrest its action*,” and destroy its usefulness.

I have further shown, that the pamphlet brought before your body as the “Committee’s defense” “lately issued,” is a stated issue for another purpose, and that it was so quoted with commendation by the Independent nearly a year ago ; but that if it had been a “defense” as represented, the indecent caricature of it is unworthy of Christian men and an insult to your body, and that the subsequent discovery and pretended correction of your Committee’s mistake involved them in new inconsistencies.

I have demonstrated at length, from the editorial columns of the Independent, that the representations of your Committee of the “effects of the Society’s policy” are prejudiced and unfounded—nay, the exact converse of the truth—that while they charge without proof, that it has “debased the moral sense of southern Christians,” and “helped to create a vicious and arrogant public sentiment *for* slavery,” the Independent proves that “it is doing indirectly more than any other institution—more than could be done directly by twenty anti-slavery societies—in the great work of teaching the

slaves to read, and of raising them with their masters to that stage of civilization in which their emancipation will be an inevitable necessity."

I have thus shown that "*the Remedy*" proposed by your Committee—revolution—is an impertinence and a wrong; that the *assumption* that "the general Christian sentiment" demands any change or would favor revolutionary designs, even without any correction of the misrepresentations of years, is baseless—as shown by the unwavering support of giving and praying men, by the position of leading minds in our institutions of learning, by the tone of the press, and by the action or inaction of ecclesiastical bodies, demonstrating that the disaffection is restricted to a limited portion of a single denomination, and without any responsibility resting on even that denomination for its rude and crude manifestations; and that the statements by which it is sought to whet the zeal of country members, of a spirit of secrecy, obstinacy, and defiance on the part of the managers of the Society, are as unreliable as the Koran.

I have hitherto adhered strictly to the topics presented in your Committee's report, in the order in which they are arranged, without turning aside for an instant to discuss collateral issues. You will not complain, then, if I pause a moment before I close, to consider,

#### THE CHARACTER AND "EFFECTS" OF YOUR COMMITTEE'S "POLICY."

If in doing this, I embrace the effects of the documents and articles which furnish the materials for your Report, no injustice will be done to any party.

The least that can be said of this onset is, that it is *unwise*. Even a just cause may be defeated and ruined by a reckless and mistaken advocacy. If your Committee had spent a twelvemonth of study to *prevent* the usefulness of the Tract Society as a temperate opponent of slavery within the limitations of its constitution, they could not have devised a more probable hinderance to such a result than their report furnishes. Candid men recoil from such leanings and alliances. Besides, an institution with a catholic basis, and with wide and delicate relations, cannot stir a step under the dictation of a small body of its constituents. Whatever may have been the obstacles and difficulties in the way of more decided action as to existing evils, they are complicated in a tenfold measure by such a course as your Committee and their allies have pursued, even if it should not arrest the good already in progress.

This policy is *unkind*. It is indecorous towards the faithful and self-sacrificing Committee, who have given their time and talent for thirty years without earthly reward, to what they believe to be a great and a sacred cause ; and who can have no conceivable motive for doing or neglecting to do other than what is right in the sight of God, and in view of their solemn relations and responsibilities. It is ungenerous towards Executive officers, whose lives are a "living sacrifice" for the highest interests of the sacred trust committed to them, and who ought not to be subjected to the indignities which even ministers of the gospel have in some instances offered them under the false impressions of your Report. It is unkind to the agents and colporteurs scattered over the land, whose spirits are tried, and whose work is doubled by the groundless suspicions and objections this policy engenders—some of them, indeed, having been persecuted on this score in the Northern states, to the point where they have felt constrained to resign their commissions. And it is unkind to a confiding Christian public, who want to love and sustain the Tract Society, but who have been educated with the habit of *believing what they read in a "religious" newspaper*, and are liable to be heedlessly jostled from their confidence by this policy.

This policy is *untruthful*. I should be glad to believe, and would fain hope that it is unintentionally so. But I am dealing with facts, not intentions. And I appeal to the preceding discussion for painful and overwhelming proof that this charge is well founded. The real responsibility of your Committee is concealed ; even the pamphlet edition of the Report presents it as the "report of the Committee" appointed the previous year. The show of investigation is without investigation. Quotations are presented as entire, which are garbled. Citations are made with no corresponding passages, or with passages having an opposite sense from that attributed to them. A book is brought forward as anti-slavery, which does not contain an anti-slavery sentiment, but would be regarded in all quarters at the present day, as pro-slavery. A false interpretation is put upon the fundamental law of the Society. A public document is grossly misrepresented as to its objects, and caricatured in its contents. The Society is arraigned as pro-slavery in its influence, against the representation even of the Independent itself. And the "general Christian sentiment" is claimed as demanding a change, or a revolution, without evidence, and contrary to all fact. What can be the effects of such a policy but to weaken popular respect for the ministry, and for ministerial bodies ; for religi-

ious men and religious newspapers? If truth and candor flee from these quarters, where shall the deceived public seek them?

This policy is *unsafe*. It imperils the usefulness and the very existence of every Christian body, institution, and interest in the land. If the Tract Society can be changed in its fundamental policy, or revolutionized in its character or official management, by detraction and misrepresentation, there is not a pastor of a church, a church organization, a board or society, large or small, in the whole land, that is secure for a day in character or position. The foundation of all sound morals, and of all order, would be broken up with the inauguration of *this* "new policy," ushered in under the sacred name of freedom and humanity!

This policy is *unchristian*. There is not a reference to the Bible in it. It is a violation of the great law of love, as embodied in the decalogue, and especially in the ninth commandment—possibly the tenth. It is in direct contravention of the spirit and precepts of the 13th chapter of Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, of the Saviour's last prayer, and of every principle distinctive of a gospel of *peace*. It is on this ground that a writer at the West publicly reprobates it as "baneful, loosening the foundations of faith in God, and destroying the principle and the terms of confidence between man and man, and awakening universal suspicion and enmity." It tends to restrain the people from receiving and reading a literature replete with saving gospel truth, because of falsely impeached fidelity to the cause of freedom. It would prevent access to the slave with the means of intellectual and moral elevation, and of salvation too. It would shut out evangelical influences from nearly half the country, on the pretence of social and political reform. It ignores the converting power of God's truth as a means of reformation. It virtually exalts other principles and interests of a humane kind above the principles and interests of the everlasting gospel and the spiritual kingdom of our Lord and Redeemer. It is the proper work of infidelity, in the spirit of the world, undertaken by Christian hands, in Christ's name.

#### CONCLUSION.

This review has been the most unwelcome task of my life. I have neither taste, talent, nor time for controversy. However necessary, at times, I loathe it. I cannot be seduced or driven into a frequent resort to it. But, as even the most peaceful and timid animals, when worried and hunted to the last extremity, will resort to means of self-defence; so, after reflection and prayer, I have

determined to confront the pursuers of an unoffending institution—not with the intention of injuring them, but of defending it. I never attended a meeting of the Publishing Committee, whose action is impeached. No member of that Committee is aware of my intention to write this letter, and not a line of it has been read to or by them, or either of them. Nor is any member of any other Committee of the Society, nor the Society itself, in any form or manner, responsible for this paper, or any part of it; yet I have spared no pains to ascertain the exact facts from official sources. I write as a man, as an American, as a Congregationalist, and as a minister of Christ's gospel. "Hear me for my cause." I write with the hope of disabusing your minds, and, so far as I may, the public mind, of injurious impressions which I believe and I know are baseless. If I have failed to carry conviction, I trust other and abler pens will do better justice to an important subject. It is time that where there has been so much error, there should be some truth.

You are to be the sole judges, dear brethren, of the course demanded by truth and righteousness on the part of your Association, in view of your "unanimous approvai" of such a Report as I have shown your Committee's to be. Almost of course, you will find it necessary, for the honor of Congregationalism, and the credit of your own body, to review, and perhaps reverse your verdict against an untried and unoffending institution. I am willing to hope that your Committee *intended* no wrong: that in the heat of a great political controversy, and in the hurry of a hundred other cares, they were themselves misled by the newspapers and documents to which they gave undue confidence; and that they will themselves disavow their own acts, when they see how wrong they are. Spare them, then, any thing like a vote of "*want of confidence*." And perhaps your forbearance, and the lesson from experience of the evils of incautious dealing with the character and interests of benevolent societies, may, with the concurring and all-powerful grace of God, lead them to study hereafter the things which make for peace, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

In our common Master's name,  
Yours affectionately and faithfully,

A CONGREGATIONALIST DIRECTOR.